



#### **About the book:**

Like sex, marriage and raising children, attitudes about money are based in culture. Although rarely discussed or considered as a factor, cultural conditioning can significantly enhance or impede an individual's financial well-being.

Financial planner Louis Barajas confronts head on the beliefs, behaviors and customs of Latino culture and their effects on personal finances in his book, **THE LATINO JOURNEY TO FINANCIAL GREATNESS, Ten Steps To Creating Wealth, Security and a Prosperous Future for the Latino Family** (January, 2003, Harper Collins). The son of Mexican immigrants and raised in the barrio of East Los Angeles, Barajas identifies the values and morals of Latino culture that may be appropriate and commendable in a family or community context, but act as pitfalls in the world of personal finance.

With advice that is direct, a style that is empathetic, and a plan that is practical, Barajas maps the road away from "barrio thinking" about money and onto a path of what he calls "financial greatness." Financial greatness is the point where money not only buys you what you want, but helps you achieve a greater life purpose. Financial greatness begins not in the pocketbook, says Barajas, but within.

"The clients I see who are truly on the path to financial greatness are happy not because they have money but because they know why they earned the money to begin with. Their greatness comes not from finances, but from themselves," says Barajas.

Through his broader, deeper approach to financial planning, Barajas encourages readers to examine their beliefs and values about money whatever their ethnic background and realize how money fits and empowers their larger life goals.

Barajas recognized his bigger financial picture after the deaths of two family members and the birth of his child. Wanting to reconnect and give back financially to the Latino community which nurtured his soul, Barajas left a lucrative boutique consulting firm catering to the affluent in Newport Beach, California to open up an office in East Los Angeles. At that point, Barajas collided with the beliefs that do not serve the long-term financial status of his community. Those include:

- Putting your destiny in God's hands, ("If God wills it,") rather than taking financial matters into their own hands.
- Using family members for financial advice rather than consulting real experts.
- Buying into the patron/peon system, where the government or some greater entity will take care of their needs.
- Letting the notion of "Machismo" or pride get in the way of finding out steps must be taken to ensure a solid financial future.
- The notion of putting on airs, or "getting too good for the community" if you seek financial betterment.

To replace these beliefs, Barajas suggests a strategic, practical system that can be adapted to a variety of incomes and lifestyle circumstances, such as determining core values, identifying desired goals and outcomes, evaluating what obstacles might get in the way of those goals, and resources that are available. And finally, what practical steps to take to accomplish "financial greatness."

"Freedom to choose our beliefs is one of the reasons millions of people come to the U.S.," says Barajas. "But here's the secret - we can also choose to change our beliefs if they don't support us."

**THE LATINO JOURNEY TO FINANCIAL GREATNESS: Ten Steps To Creating Wealth, Security and a Prosperous Future for the Latino Family** by Louis Barajas  
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